

DESPAIR, EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION: DEVELOPING GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISM

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Introduction In this lesson, students are assigned to view an HBO documentary or other media representation and to write a short film review. A discussion in of Human Rights issues using documentary or media representation will set the context for larger global issues. Next, students meet in groups to discuss their film review and then present their collaborative film review as a group. Students are then assigned a family history research project to locate an ancestor in their family and write an essay on their research findings. Finally, students are assigned a service-learning project in human rights, either on campus or off campus in their local community.

Essential Questions Students will respond to essential questions such as:

- How can I review and process confronting violent media images and topics in Human Rights without closing my heart and turning away?
- Who are my ancestors? What did they endure and survive in the past that empower me today?
- What can I do as an individual or with people in my class to make a difference in Human Rights?

Learning Outcomes Student will learn upon the outcome of this lesson to:

- Articulate and define historical and contemporary Human Rights issues related to peace and justice, conflict and war, and violence and non-violence;
- Research and to identify theoretical causes of peace and conflict in Human Rights issues;
- Demonstrate negotiation strategies for identifying non-violent alternatives to conflict;
- Explain the concept of global interdependence, i.e. economical, political, racial/ethnic, as it relates to peace and conflict;
- Remove blocks to personal and societal transformation by engaging in service-learning projects.
- To self-reflect through journal writing, writing film reviews, and essays on their research and film critiques.

- Assessment Students will be assessed on their
- Journal Writing—students will self-reflect their learning through eight weekly journal assignments;
 - Research Essays—using primary source documents, students will write one three page essay on their research findings;
 - Film reviews and critiques—students will write two short film critiques, one page each on the documentary they view; and
 - Participation in Service-Learning Projects—students will spend twenty hours over the course of the semester giving service on campus or off campus in their local community that supports Human Rights issues.

Documentaries Home Box Office (HBO) Documentaries – www.hbo.com

1. Marathon Boy (2010)

Description:

Gemma Atwal’s dynamic epic follows four-year-old Budhia, rescued from poverty by Biranchi Das, a larger-than-life judo coach and operator of an orphanage for slum children in the eastern Indian state of Orissa. When Budhia displays an uncommon talent for long-distance running, Biranchi nurtures his gift, heralding him as a folk hero for the impoverished masses, and maybe even for India itself. But after golden child Budhia breaks down during a world-record 65 kilometer run at the age of four, public opinion begins to turn on the guru and his disciple, and soon the two are swept up in a maelstrom of media controversy and political scandal. Following Budhia’s roller-coaster journey over five years, *Marathon Boy* is a Dickensian tale of greed, corruption, and broken dreams set between the heart-racing world of marathon running, the poverty-stricken slums, and the political intrigue of a modernizing India. Nothing is what it seems in Budhia and Biranchi’s story, and Atwal continually shifts viewer identification to tell both a shocking story of opportunism and child exploitation, but also a touching portrait of an authentic bond between a parent and child

2. HBO Real Sports: Maria Toorpakai, Squash Player and Pakistani refugee (aired February 19, 2013), www.hbo.com

Description:

South Waziristan, in the northwest of Pakistan, along the Afghan border, has been called “the most dangerous place on earth.” Fundamentalist and repressive, this is the home of the Taliban, where young girls rarely go to school and extremists consider women’s sports un-Islamic. This is Maria Toorpakai Wazir’s home. Disguised as a boy when she was a child, Maria grew up differently from other girls. This is the story of a girl who should not have been let outside her home after the age of eight, who is now on a journey to become the number one squash player in the world and prove that women can do anything.

Maria's father, Shamsul Qayyum Wazir is an elder's tribesman, a descendant from a large and prominent political family in South Waziristan. As a young man he began speaking out in his community about women's rights. He felt impassioned that empowering the women of his community was not just right, but also essential to the development and growth of the tribal region of Pakistan. His family denounced him, saying Shamsul was mentally ill. They married him off to the daughter of a rival political family, Yasrab Nayab. Shamsul loved Yasrab and saw this as an opportunity to educate his new wife at home. They had two daughters – Ayesha and Maria. Shamsul had a plan for his girls. At the age of three, Ayesha began her education. Night and day, she studied and when Maria was old enough, she joined in the lessons. Although Maria was always different from her older sister. She didn't want to stay inside and learn. When Maria was a child the Toorpakai family moved from town to town because of the Taliban. This left Maria feeling angry and displaced and without any outlets to put that energy. She liked being physical, playing outside with the boys and didn't want to be confined like all the other girls. Shamsul wanted her to be free, to be a child, so he shaved her head, dressed her as a boy, and called her Changes Kahn. Please see www.mariatorpakai.org.

Other Suggested film, media representation:

- Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com
- Who Do You Think You Are Series, www.nbc.com
- NBC television series that explores family history, empowerment through

Websites For composite of the work of master teacher, Joanna Macy. Please see The Work That Reconnects, www.joannamacy.net

Websites for students to explore their family history and genealogy on immigration to the United States:

- www.ancestor.com
- www.americanancestors.org
- www.newyorkancestors.org
- www.africanamericanancestors.org
- www.greatmigration.org
- www.plymouthancestors.org
- www.notablekin.org